

Media Advisory: 2017 Delaware Poetry Out Loud State Finals



WHAT: Thirteen Delaware high school students will participate in the state finals for Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest at the Smyrna Opera House. The winner of this competition will represent Delaware and advance to the National Finals in Washington, DC on April 25-26, 2017, where \$50,000 in awards and school stipends will be distributed. This program is sponsored by the Delaware Division of the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Poetry Foundation.

WHEN: Tuesday, February 28 2017 at 7:00 p.m. Students start arriving at 5 p.m.

WHERE: Smyrna Opera House: [Click here for directions.](#)

WHO: Featured speakers and judges will be:

- **Speakers:**

- The Honorable Jeffrey W. Bullock, Secretary of State
- Paul Weagraff, Director, Delaware Division of the Arts
- J. Mack Wathen, Chair, Delaware State Arts Council

- **Master of Ceremonies:**

- Scott F. Mason, President of Chapel Street Players and award-winning actor, playwright, and director

- **Judges:**

- Chantalle Ashford, Choral Director and English

Teacher, Indian River High School

- Russell Susumu Endo, Poet, 2011 Individual Artist Fellow: Poetry
- Ajit Matthew George, Organizer, TEDxWilmington
- Joseph Masiello, Adjunct Professor, Wilmington University
- Devon Miller-Duggan, Professor of Creative Writing, University of Delaware
- Jane Rubini, Founder and Chair, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Communication Contest
- Dr. Donna Blakey, Delaware State Arts Council member will serve as the accuracy judge

▪ **Entertainment:**

- JW2, is made up of James Witherite (organ) and Jonathan W. Whitney (drums), who bring their own originals and favorites from the jazz, funk, and old-school R&B genres to life.

OTHER: Attendance at Smyrna Opera House is free and open to the public, although seating is limited. The [2017 Poetry Out Loud Media Kit](#) for this event is available on our website. Hi-Res photos will be available the day after the event. Use hashtags: #POL17, #iampoetryoutloud, and #Delaware. Tag us at: @ArtsDelaware

About Poetry Out Loud

The Delaware Division of the Arts sponsors the Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest program in Delaware schools and the state finals. Competition begins at the classroom level in the fall and culminates with the state finals each spring. Twenty schools and over 2,000 Delaware students participated in the Poetry Out Loud program in the current academic year. The Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest competition is presented in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation. For more details about the partnership and program, see the program overview [here](#).

About the Delaware Division of the Arts

The Delaware Division of the Arts is an agency of the State of Delaware. Together with its advisory body, the Delaware State Arts Council, the Division administers grants and programs that support arts programming, educate the public, increase awareness of the arts, and integrate the arts into all facets of Delaware life. Funding for Division programs is provided by annual appropriations from the Delaware General Assembly and grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. For more information about the Delaware Division of the Arts, visit artsdel.org or call 302-577-8278.

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Contact: Leeann Walleett, Program Officer, Communications and Marketing, 302-577-8280, leeann.walleett@delaware.gov